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A

LETTER

FROM

RICHARD BURKE, ESQ.

TO

***** ***** ESQ. OF CORK.

IN WHICH THE LEGALITY AND PROPRIETY OF THE MEETING RECOMMENDED IN

MR. BYRNE'S CIRCULAR LETTER,

ARE DISCUSSED;

TOGETHER WITH

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A MEASURE

PROPOSED BY A FRIEND TO BE SUBSTITUTED IN THE PLACE OF

THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE.

DUBLIN:

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THE foregoing letter having been handed about and much ſpoken of at Cork, Byrne has been favoured with a copy from his correſpondent there. The letter being entirely on public ſubjects, he hopes no apology is neceſſary to the writer, for the preſent publication.

LETTER, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I RETURN you with many thanks the copy of the letter you were ſo obliging as to communicate to me. As the name is not ſubſcribed I do not know the author. But he expreſſes himſelf with elegance and ability. However, I cannot help obſerving the diſſimilarity between the former and the latter part of the letter, which indeed ſeems to me *ſo* great, that I ſhould conceive it to be in fact two different letters written by different perſons. If however it is in reality one and the ſame, and that your clerk has not inadvertently pieced together two different letters, I am not a little ſurprized that your correſpondent, who appears at the beginning ſo ardent in your cauſe and ſpeaks with ſuch generous and indignant contempt of your opponents, ſhould in the cloſe adopt their ſentiments even to the very expreſſions. The latter part of the letter might be conſidered as a tolerably compleat and ſatisfactory repertory of the

invidious terms and opprobrious epithets (with their ſynonyma) employed in order to throw an unjuſt odium on the formation of a Catholic Committee, or as your friend calls it (in the language of your enemies) a Catholic Convention. He thinks himſelf bound, he ſays, to proteſt againſt *that* meaſure. "He cannot even conceive the *pretence* for it." According to him, "If there be any government in the country, it cannot and *will* not be endured."

Your correſpondent (if I am not miſtaken) is one of thoſe friends who wiſh the Catholics ſucceſs, but who unfortunately objects to every thing they do to obtain it. His letter, I muſt confeſs, appears to me the moſt convincing argument in favour of the meaſure he diſſuades. Among the many advantages attending general meetings and common conſultations (things indiſpenſible to the ſucceſs of every public cauſe) not the leaſt conſiderable is, that they enable men more effectually to diſcover and to do away the miſrepreſentations, and to efface the falſe colours and gloſſes which the adverſary in a political controverſy never fails to throw upon each event as it ariſes; ſuch as the enemies of the Catholics throw upon every thing they do or do not do. They are by no means remiſs. But when I ſee that the cavils of your bittereſt enemies have taken poſſeſſion of the mind of ſo zealous *a*

friend to your cauſe as your correſpondent appears to be, I am doubly convinced of the neceſſity of your having ſtanding and regular meetings (general and particular) in order to counteract this growing evil, and to diſpel the ever gathering clouds of chicane, ſophiſtry and defamation.

If I have the misfortune to differ with your friend in ſome particulars, it is a conſolation to me to find that he does not always agree with himſelf. He expreſſes " an *ardent* hope" that " the Catholics ſhould purſue *ſteadily* their pre- " ſent object," which (for many weighty reaſons) he thinks eſſentially neceſſary to the well being of the State. The Catholics therefore in *his* opinion as well as mine, are ſeeking their own good, and at the ſame time, acting *as patriots* for *the good of their country*. He alſo very juſtly obſerves, that the Catholics " are *the true and devoted friends of monarchy* and the *victims to their over-zeal for that ſpecies of conſtitution*." But when theſe patriots and theſe " devoted friends and victims to monarchy" only begin to think of laying their heads together a little (for the monſtrum horrendum of their Committee is no more) juſt to concert what is beſt for them to do and to ſay, then " it is a thing not to be endured"; it is " a meaſure of the moſt alarming and dangerous tendency which has occurred in our time." No expreſſion of diſmay is ſufficiently

great; and the whole gradus of legal and colloquial obloquy is to be turned over to find adequate epithets and phraſes of reprobation.

The miniſterial writers on this ſubject are at leaſt conſiſtent. In ſpeaking of the loyalty of the Catholics (ſee the letter ſigned a Brother Barriſter in Faulkner's Journal) they ſay "It exactly reſembles the loyalty of a chained tyger to his keeper." I own I myſelf ſhould expect no great good from a committee of tygers chained or unchained. It is added by the ſame polite author, that the new committee will be a collection "of the loweſt and moſt ignorant banditti from every corner of the kingdom." This alſo I confeſs might be ſomewhat dangerous. But how your friend is to juſtify *his* apprehenſions, or why he ſhould imagine the ſtate would be endangered by an aſſembly compoſed (with great care and ſelection) of thoſe whom *he* thinks "*the true and devoted friends of monarchy*";—this I muſt allow paſſes my poor comprehenſion; unleſs indeed your friend ſuppoſes (quite contrary to the nature of the whole creation) that "the friends of monarchy" are a ſort of animals which acquire ferocity the inſtant they become gregarious—and which are only ſafe and gentle when they wander alone, ſcowl at each other as they paſs, and are hunted into holes and corners by the Nimrods of civil and religious perſecution.

In calling the Catholics the *devoted* friends of monarchy,"

monarchy," your correſpondent has exactly hit the point. His expreſſion is *extremely* oppoſite. They were the *victims* of their loyalty in times paſt, *and they are ſo now:* They are *martyrs* to their *well grounded* reliance on the wiſdom, the beneficence and the juſtice of their ſovereign. That is their crime. It is the crime of the Catholic Committee that in the month of October, 1791, they dared to employ *your humble ſervant*, (a perſon according to the common preſumptions, not wholly adverſe to the principles of a mixed monarchy) to lay a repreſentation of their grievances at his majeſty's feet, through the miniſters of his immediate confidence. Ille dies primus lethi primuſque malorum cauſa fuit. This was their crime—the inexpiable guilt which admits of no atonement. Hence lord Kenmare's addreſs. Hence the libels of the winter, and hence the clamours of the ſummer. It is this, which, from *Catholics*, has reconverted you into *Papiſts*. It is this which has turned your *laſt* Committee into a ſet of low tradeſmen, and a combination of ſeditious and turbulent mechanics. It is this which has metamorphoſed your *preſent* Committee into a Convention—into a Popiſh congreſs—into a French democracy—and (as if *that* was the climax of all reproach) into a ſecond *parliament*. It is to this you owe the vociferation of the Houſe of Commons, and the venal outcries of the Caſtle dependants againſt yourſelves and your *Engliſh*

liſh agent. It is this which made you a ſet of ſhop-keepers, and ſhop-lifters. It is to this you owe the contumelious rejection of your petition; the ſolemn mockery of Sir H. Langriſhe's bill—the military denunciations of their Secretary—the defiances of their penſioned champions, and the ſcurrility of their licenced buffoons. In fine, You ſtand indebted to your application to the throne, for the ſlanders of the Grand Juries, the extravagancies of the Corporation of Dublin; and the tender of lives and fortunes to enforce the ſentence of perpetual ſlavery.

It muſt therefore be allowed by every impartial man, that you have brought all your misfortunes upon your own heads. If we fairly conſider the nature of the offence, we cannot be ſurpriſed at the magnitude of the chaſtiſement. What, to go and interrupt the ſmooth career of ſubordinate authority by an appeal *to the king himſelf?* Shall the antient reign of uninquiſitive confidence be moleſted? Are the domeſtic comforts of *government in a family party* to be diſturbed?—Is the ſtream of official diſpatches to flow on no longer, in one even tenor? And ſhall the channels of miniſterial greatneſs be all interſected and broken up, by—*A direct communication between the people of Ireland and their ſovereign*? Alas! Sir, you little think how agreeable it is to rule without controul; to diſpoſe of the fate of men, of

parties,

parties, of perſuaſions, and of the nation itſelf—by having the whole ſtory to yourſelf; by the virtue of unqueſtioned repreſentations, and the magic of half a line of a letter,—from a ſecretary on one ſide of the water, to a ſecretary on the other. While this was the caſe every thing went on well. No hitch, no rub. The ſhepherds of the caſtle fold might ſing,

" My time O! ye muſes was happily ſpent,
" While Cloe* went with me wherever I went."

And ſhall this condition of ſtate felicity, this happy arcadia of politics, be invaded and deſtroyed by the machinations and negociations of a vile Catholic committee? It is enough to vex a ſaint! For accordingly, from that day forward, there has not been one hour of miniſterial comfort or even ſo much as a quiet diſh of official tea. What poſting about the country! What cloſetting and whiſpering! What running and riding! What writing and lying! Scampering lord lieutenants and chancellors on horſeback—Meſſenger after meſſenger ſent to England; miniſter after miniſter. Firſt the ſecretary; then a ſecretary at war; then a chancellor of the exchequer; then the ſecretary himſelf once more. Then one commiſſioner of the cuſtoms; then another; then a chancellor of the exchequer again; and cabinet counſellors ſent off, each after each, like paper ſhrads at the tail of a ſchool boy's kite.

* The reader is to obſerve that Cloe does *not* mean the Engliſh government.

And

And all this along of Byrne and his damned committee.

Let any one for an inſtant, put himſelf in the place of the Iriſh adminiſtration, and then conceive what their feelings muſt be. Methinks I can hear them bewail their lot, and piteouſly demand of each other--" Was it for this we fret-
" ted and toiled? Was it for this we reſiſted
" penſion bill and place bill, and reſponſibility
" bill? Was it for this we bribed and jobbed,
" and jobbed and bribed again? Was it for this
" we built cuſtom-houſes, and bridges, and par-
" liament-houſes; and unbuilt them, and rebuilt
" them? And was it for this we made a police
" eſtabliſhment, to buy the corporation and *not*
" to keep the peace?—What have we not done?
" We have ſold the Peerage and bought the
" Commons. We have ſtood the *eloquence* of
" Grattan, and the hatred of the public,—and
" all this for Banquo's iſſue; that Papiſts and
" their fry, to all generations, ſhould vote at
" elections in ſpite of our teeth, and what is
" worſe, eſtabliſh the *ſucceſsful precedent of a direct*
" *application to the crown.*"

I think I hear them thus renew their ſorrows, and in a way that goes to one's heart, at the fate of all their tender ſolicitudes,—" Have
" we not made a *Chancellor* of our *own?*
" Have we not with dextrous patience waited
" times

" times and ſeaſons to hook in the *better*
" *half* of regal patronage, while at the ſame
" time, we angled for the *Iriſh nation* with
" the bait of *an Iriſh chancellor?* Have we not
" alſo made a *Secretary* of our *own?* Did we not
" take him when he was little, and when he was
" but an *aid de camp*, in order to ſhape him to our
" hands and to train him in the way he ſhould go?
" And did we not inſtruct him in all the learning
" of the caſtle, that we might afterwards palm
" him upon an Engliſh government as an *Engliſh*
" ſecretary—as a PERPETUAL SECRETARY? And
" did we not do ſo in the hopes, that when the
" courſe of nature ſhould make him a peer, he
" might by an eaſy tranſition, ſlide into *a Lord*
" *Lieutenant?* And that ſo, we might have a Lord
" Lieutenant *of our own.* And ſo all be our own?
" And have we done all theſe things, that in the
" very moment of projection, when the ſcheme
" of miniſterial independance was complete,
" (without controul from the people below, or
" from the crown above) all our councils ſhould
" be daſhed, and all our labours defeated by one
" Byrne, and one Keogh, and one M'Kenna; a
" parcel of Popiſh miſcreants, our bondſmen and
" our galley ſlaves, yet welted as it were, with
" the ſtripes of our penal ſtatutes; Whom we

" never thought of, whom no living mortal " could have thought of comprehending, in any " poſſible ſcheme or calculation of politics."

If the preſent ruling cabal did not uſe thoſe preciſe expreſſions, I am ſure they felt and reaſoned preciſely in that manner. If this ſtate of mind does not either juſtify or extenuate, it certainly *accounts* for all their ſubſequent conduct. It is human nature, or rather the nature of human ambition. They were indeed in a terrible taking. If three millions of Iriſhmen ſhould be ſuffered as it were, *to hold the tenure of their liberties immediately from the crown*, the conſequence was obvious. It was determined that the crown and the people ſhould depend *on the caſtle* and *not* the caſtle on the people and the crown. Difficulty therefore, was to be piled upon difficulty, Alp upon Alp, to make an inſurmountable barrier between the *protection* of the crown and the *allegiance* of the Catholics. In ſo preſſing an exigence, miniſters looked for aid to every quarter; and in the mixed paſſion of diſdain, mortification and deſpair, they did not ſcruple to invoke the genius of the popery laws, and to conjure up the ſlumbering ſpirit of religious diſcord. *Quo nemquam terra vocato.—Non concuſſa tremit.* And under thoſe happy auſpices, they have ſince

made, and are ſtill making a ſeries of deſperate plunges. They then begun and *now* continue a train of dark and intricate intrigues, which have endangered the peace of the nation, tainted the honor of government and ſhaken the ſtability of the throne. They have been falſe to every branch and member of the conſtitution, and to every intereſt of the ſtate. In fine, (and theſe words are not new to Mr. Hobart) *they have ſown the ſeeds in this kingdom* (I truſt they may be eradicated) *of univerſal, endleſs and inextricable confuſions*. But theſe things ſhall be explained hereafter.

To return to my preſent ſubject, the Catholic convention and the letter of your friend. I ſhould beg to know from him, in *what* this committee which excites ſuch a prodigious alarm (and which in deference to him, I ſhall in future call a convention) *eſſentially* differs from the *former* Catholic committee, which excited no alarm at all. But he has juſt diſcovered it to be what the law calls " an unlawful aſſembly". It is plain he is no lawyer. He ſeems to have taken up the vulgar idea, which the grand juries have run away with, that every collection of people, that does not poſſeſs *a corporal ſeal and a power to ſue and to be ſued*, is " an un-

lawful aſſembly." Whereas the term has no ſuch meaning at all. In its legal acceptation, it means an actual *diſturbance of the peace*, and nothing elſe. It is uſed to ſignify a ſort of incipient riot, not carried into effect; and which the law conſidering as undeſerving its full rigour, and yet not being willing wholly to overlook, has by a ſort of legal ſubtlety, analyzed and ſubdivided, as if the offence conſiſted of two parts, the act and the intention, and has denominated the latter "an unlawful aſſembly." It *always* however implies a real *tumult*, and ſuch as requires, not ſo much the animadverſion of criminal juſtice, as it juſtifies the immediate interpoſition of the magiſtrate.

The perſon who formed the reſolutions of the Limerick meeting, I conclude to be a lawyer, and therefore fully conſcious, that your committee did not come within that or any other deſcription of criminality. This I conclude, becauſe he has violently laboured by logical proceſs, and the help of forced conſtruction and no little miſrepreſentation, to deduce a ſort of criminality out of *the mode of election* recommended by Mr. Byrne, and has drawn I know not what analogy between it and the National

Aſſembly.

Aſſembly. I have ſince ſeen the ſame ſort of ſtuff in a paper ſingned "A Brother Barriſter," which I had occaſion to quote at the beginning of my letter. That piece of writing and the Limerick reſolutions, bear in common a marked, and to me a very ſingular character of ſtile. I cannot help throwing away a ſentence upon it. It is a ſort of pert, loquacious, ſophiſtic ſcurrility, affecting to be eloquent; and in which, by ringing the changes of two or three vilifying catch words, bad logic is mingled interchangeably with ill manners, in ſuch a manner as to produce a kind of rhetorical chime, which is neither argument nor ſatire, but ſounds ſomething like both. If it was not for this ſingularity, the author ſeems unworthy of notice. Whoever he is, if as he pretends, he is a lawyer at all, he cannot be ignorant, that with regard to "an unlawful aſſembly" the manner in which it is convoked, is nothing to the purpoſe. It derives and can only derive any degree of criminality from the mode of proceeding, *after it is formed*; and like all things neutral in themſelves, can only acquire a moral quality by ſubſequent modification. It muſt be a modification of violence, and of violence in deeds and *not* in words. What then in the name of God do they ſuppoſe this popiſh congreſs

greſs is to *do* which can make it an "unlawful aſſembly?" Do the tremblers and Quakers of the Proteſtant aſcendancy believe, that *theſe Papiſts*, will come armed with ſticks and ſtaves; with bludgeons and ſhelalahs, and ſuch other inſtruments of popular warfare? Do they ſuppoſe they will ſally forth upon ſober grand jurors and pacific corporators, as they are walking along the ſtreets and thinking of nothing at all? Is it conceived, that they will proceed in a body to ſet fire to the Statue of King William, as was apprehended ſome months ago by a ſage and *noble* ſtickler for the Proteſtant aſcendancy? Or that they will tumultuouſly pull down (or begin to pull down) the gambling houſe at the corner of College-green or any other public nuiſance? If they do not meet for the purpoſe of performing ſome ſuch feats as theſe (your correſpondent may ſet his mind at reſt) they are *not* an "unlawful aſſembly." Nor will their meeting be in any manner illegal; although they may do illegal acts *in* that meeting as they may *out of it*, and neither more nor leſs.

By the law of England, it is the right of the ſubject to form aſſemblies to deliberate on their intereſts, public or private—a right founded in Nature. True it is, that right like every other,

may

may be perverted by evil men to evil purpoſes. But the preſumption is *the contrary*. For he that made man a ſocial being, by ſo doing determined every aggregation of men for good rather than for evil. Nor do I ſee any reaſon why the principle ſhould be falſe with regard to the Catholics, except it is (as I ſaid before) becauſe they are "the true and devoted friends of monarchy, and the victims to their over-zeal for that ſpecies of conſtitution." As to the arguments founded on the mode of election (which ſome people ſuppoſe even to have erred on the ſide of preciſe regularity); as far as *that* operates at all, it leads to a *contrary* concluſion. As it ſhould appear to me, all that complex and deliberative preliminary formality, which, when complicated with after acts, might riſe to a crime of a higher degree, would not only *not* make the Catholic meeting an "unlawful aſſembly," but would take it wholly out of that entire claſs of ſubordinate and tumultuous offences. Sure I am indeed, that it is not criminal either in a high or in a low degree, either in law, or in morals. But that as the affairs of this kingdom ſtand at preſent, upon every conſideration of a prudent ſtateſman and a wiſe man, with regard to the well being of the government and religion of this country, ſome ſuch meeting

ing of the Catholics, as is recommended by Mr. Byrne's circular letter, is *now* eſſentially neceſſary to the ſalvation of the ſtate; and if contrary to the nature of the thing and the intention of its propoſers, this meeting ſhould fail in its effect, or decline to evil; it will be owing ſolely to the defects which may ariſe in its compoſition, from the ill-timed, ill-intentioned, turbid and I might ſay ſeditious efforts made by the miniſters to prevent it.

But as I ſaid the nature of the Catholic meeting for good or bad, will depend upon its after acts. I have a firm reliance, that they will act like good men, like good ſubjects, like good Iriſhmen, and like good Catholics; that they will diſplay their grievances (which are thoſe of their country) without diſguiſe; and that, unſhaken in conſcious patriotiſm and *approved* loyalty, the legal firmneſs and *conſtitutional* moderation with which they will aſſert their cauſe, whilſt it convinces the judgment, conciliates the affections, and attracts the reſpect of all good men, will ſtrike a legitimate diſmay into every heart, that is a ſimular of fictitious terrors; into him who diffuſes falſe alarms, and into thoſe who ſetting in motion, theinfernal might of Machiavelian machines

chines, though with the minds of pigmies—as the miniſterial expedient of the day—have repreſented 3,000,000 of the people to be in a ſtate of rebellion.

Such I truſt will be the conduct of the Catholic convention. I can however conceive a mode of proceeding which would be reprehenſible indeed, and which I would willingly abandon to the invectives of friend or enemy. If for inſtance the members of that aſſembly, although not "armed in a warlike manner," ſhould ſet forth "turbulent ſpeeches"—*in terrorem populi*"—and publicly talk of *drawing ſwords and fighting it out*; if they were to throw down the gauntlet in the face of the public, and to ſtake "their lives and fortunes" to ſtrings of reſolutions expreſſing an unalterable determination to curtail the authority of parliament and to prevent the repeal of "exiſting laws"—If they were to declare that to the "utmoſt extent," and "at *every* hazard," they were determined upon their point, and that as their anceſtors had loſt their rights "*by the ſword*," ſo they "*by the ſword*," were reſolved to recover them; and if to this farago of nonſenſe and ſedition, they were to add a *formal defiance* of the ſovereign power *and a flat denial* of the

competence of a legiſlature in which *they* and they *alone* were repreſented, I ſhould then agree with your correſpondent in ſaying that, " If there *be* any government in the country, it cannot and will not be endured." Nay, I am ſo happy in being able, for once, to concur with any friend of yours, that *in complaiſance to him*, I am willing to allow (if he chuſes it that any miniſter who would *permit* ſuch things in any meeting, Catholic or Proteſtant (I ſay nothing of *abetting*) deſerves to loſe his head.

I ſaid your correſpondent was no lawyer; but I take him to be a politician; a politician of ſome eminence, and not a little in the ſecret, as he ſpeaks ſo very confidently of what is to be done in *parliament*, and that too, at " the *meeting* of parliament." He tells you with great ſtreſs, that " he *does* believe that *a declaratory act* (againſt the Catholic Committee) will be adopted," which he moſt truly obſerves, is " likely to diſturb the country." His meaning I take it, is that Parliament, in ſome way or other, will exert its authority to diſperſe the Catholic convention and to prevent it from reaſſembling. *I* alſo *do* believe ſuch a meaſure to be in contemplation; and I will tell you why. Becauſe it is the *moſt* abſurd meaſure which the circumſtance admits. It is a meaſure which would imply the loweſt ſtage

of childiſh imbecility, if it was not redeemed by a ſort of adultneſs in iniquity: Unfortunate miniſters! Do they intend, in their altitudes, to ſet the whole ſtate upon a ſingle caſt—a caſt in which nothing can be won and all may be loſt? Do they intend—in the delirium of their temerity—to commit the legiſlature of their country with three millions of the Iriſh people? In the paroxiſm of their incapacity—do they intend to reduce three-fourths of their maſter's ſubjects, to the dread alternative, either to relinquiſh their unqueſtionable birth-rights, and the hope of themſelves and their poſterity for ever—or elſe once for all to examine into the competence of that parliament in which they are *not* repreſented?*

Here is room for meditation! Here at leaſt is room to contemplate with admiration, the happy products of miniſterial leiſure. Theſe are the airy caſtles *of* the caſtle; the golden dreams of the king's ſervants! Theſe are the thoughts with which they ſooth their imagination in the ſhade of their ſummer retreats; the *expedients* they deviſe for the welfare and *tranquillity* of

* "Gentlemen ſay it is dangerous to commit parliament with the volunteers. I know it is dangerous, and I know the man who does it, ſhould anſwer the crime with his head." Mr. Fitzgibbon's Speech, 29 Nov. 1783. The Catholics are 3,000,000; The volunteers were 30,000. If 30,000: ſhould anſwer with his head:: 3,000,000:

Ireland!——To commit the parliament with the Catholics is one ſtep. So far ſo good. But when the Miniſters of deſperation have made *that* plunge, I would aſk, what plunge they mean to make next? Have they made their computations—their eſtimates,—their proviſion?—Do they intend—but no. In charity I will conclude that their minds are innocent of thought, guiltleſs of intention, and inſenſible of conſequence. We muſt of neceſſity ſuppoſe a ſort of miniſterial idiocy; and that, without any formed deſign againſt the peace of their country.—In a meer fit of impotent ſpleen—and quarrelling with the Catholics as a queezy child quarrels with his toy, —They mean only to come puling to parliament with the tales of their diſtreſſes and their miſhaps, as the infant calls upon his nurſe, to revenge him upon the immutable nature of things.

Anthony in Shakeſpeare ſays to Cleopatra: that ſhe is worthy "to ſit by an emperor and command him taſks." What is the taſk Mr. Hobart means to impoſe on the obedient omnipotence of parliament? Only this; To prevent oppreſſion from generating diſcontent! To ſatisfy the appetite for liberty without gratification! To make the deprivation and the poſſeſſion of privileges, objects, neither of complaint nor of deſire! And laſtly, to enable millions of men

men to petition without aſſembling and to aſſemble without delegation. That is all that Miniſters have to do, and nothing more, in order to paſs the reſt of their lives in peace and quiet, and to relieve themſelves from all further trouble from Catholics and from Catholic conventions.

What ſort of creatures muſt thoſe men be, and what muſt be the conformation of their minds, that bent ſo long on theſe affairs, they have not yet been able to make the ſmalleſt eſtimate, or to meaſure in their minds the dimenſions of this Catholic buſineſs? It ſeems they ſtill imagine (notwithſtanding the experiments of a twelvemonth) that they can get rid of it by a trick, and ſhuffle it off by a day's debate; that they can drown it by a mercenary ſhout, or that they will be able to exorciſe and lay it for ever—*pulveris exigni jactu*—with the formulary of an act of parliament. Unhappy men! The weightieſt member—by far the greateſt community in the nation—They make no more of it than if they had to do with the aldermen of Skinner's Alley. They talk of their declaratory acts as of a bill of incloſure. They would deal with the right of petition (the ſoul and eſſence of the conſtitution) as familiarly as with a regulation of exciſe. They think, (if thinking it may be called), that they can pull up and pull down

3,000,000

3,000,000 of people with as much facility as their parliamentary maſons convert doric into ionic, or ſubſtitute a portico for a wall!

Well! it is ſomething at leaſt to aſcertain ideas and to come to particulars: Parliament is to do the buſineſs. But in what way? What is to be the legiſlative noſtrum, and panacea for the whole Catalogue of miniſterial akes and ails. Of all things in the univerſal world it is to be, a declaratory act! I admire the thought. I long to ſee the bill. I hope it is in hand. It will be a work worthy the ſcientific penmanſhip of the Speaker of a Houſe of Commons, yea the Speaker of a Houſe of Lords. But what *precedent* does he draw from it? That is the queſtion. Is he to open the Engliſh ſtatute book—and (with an omen fortunate to the conſervation of empire and to the tranquillity of nations)—to tranſcribe the ſixth of George the third (for binding America in all caſes whatſoever) or more judicious in his choice, will he ſelect the ſixth of George the firſt, as more peculiarly and immediately applicable to the affairs of Ireland?

I really feel myſelf growing quite curious, inquiſitive and intereſted in the fortunes of this famous act of parliament, which rolling months, it ſeems, will bring into the realms of light, and which is already foreſeen by your friend in his prophetic

prophetic viſions. What is this *declaratory* act to *declare?* Or rather what is it to be? Is this *declaratory* law to be a public law, or a private law? A penal law, or a remedial law? A perpetual law, or a temporary law? Or any thing in ſhort *except* a declaratory law. This law (whatever it may delight to be called) is it to take away the right of petition from three-fourths of the people, or from *all* the people? Is it to prohibit petitions in general, and for ever, or only petitions *to the King* nominatim? and for a time. And is that prohibition to extend to *all* the King's ſubjects, or only "to the true and devoted friends of monarchy, and the victims to their over-zeal for that ſpecies of conſtitution"? Is this act to allow petitions, but not to allow meetings to frame thoſe petitions? Or is it to allow meetings provided they are not called *Committees?* Or of Committees provided they are unelected and unauthorized by thoſe whoſe petition they are to frame, preſent and proſecute? And provided no ſecurity is taken againſt the objections of thoſe, who when they cannot deny the juſtice of the demand, would cavil with the authority under which it is preferred, and pretend ignorance of the deſires of the people whom they do not chuſe to relieve.

I do not find your friend has thought proper

to

to inform you on all or on any one of thoſe particulars. And yet one would be curious to learn what form of words was to be uſed, and what the mode of parliamentary incantation, which is at once to tranſmute the *notions* of the Grand Juries into *the law of the land*; the Catholic Committee into "an unlawful aſſembly"; and the journeymen jobbers of the Poſt Aſſembly of Dublin, into grave apprentices of the law and oracles of the conſtitution.

One word more upon this ſubject. If an act declaring the Catholic committee to be an "unlawful aſſembly" could in the nature of things, beg, bully, ſteal or buy its way through its various readings, commitments and reports.—If, I ſay, that legiſlative falſehood ſhould receive the ſanction of one and of the other houſe of Parliament,—I much doubt whether *any* Chancellor would have the aſſurance to ſend it over for the royal aſſent. If however the faction of the caſtle ſhould ſucceed, both in licking their monſter into an act of parliament, and in cramming it down the throat of their ſovereign,—what would it avail them? What would they get by it?—Is this declaratory act in its preamble *to declare* itſelf *perpetual and incapable of repeal*? Becauſe, if not, and if as I ſaid, it does not with an Alexandrian ſtroke cut the knot of all difficulties

culties and aboliſh the right of petition altogether; it remains to be told how the ſubject is to be prevented from petitioning for *the repeal* of it? And will not the Catholics to obtain that repeal, petition, and to frame and proſecute that petition, form ten Committees for one they have at preſent and ten public meetings? And will they not multiply reſolutions and declarations without end? Certainly they will. This is what the miniſters will get by their declaratory act; and thus "the laſt ſtate of the Proteſtant aſcendancy will be worſe than the firſt." Such is and will ever be the reſult of all the violent efforts and cunning devices of prevaricating power, to ſtifle the cries of juſtice and to evade the calls of duty.

For which reaſon among others, you may reſt aſſured that this declaratory act with which your friend is frightened and would frighten you, will never have any other exiſtence than it has at preſent. That is to ſay, a chimerical being in the mind which gave it birth. It is a thing neither in eſſe nor in poſſe, and which if it could be, would only defeat the end for which it was. It is evidently the offspring, or rather the abortion of an underſtanding loſt in the mazes of unſucceſsful ſtratagems. A ſort of miniſterial *night mare*—the ſick dream of ſome *ſick* politician, a vapour aſcending from the crude indigeſtions

of inflammatory reſolutions; the heavy olios of the Grand Juries, or the ribaldry of a Limerick meeting.

Your committee; your congreſs; your convention; your parliament (let them call it what they will) is neceſſary to the exerciſe of the right of petition. It is legal and cannot be prevented. It cannot be prevented becauſe it is legal, and it is legal becauſe it cannot be prevented. For what! has the conſtitution ſubſiſted for ſo many centuries and is it not yet provided againſt "an open attempt to overawe the legiſlature?" for that is the word of the day. Is there yet no written and no unwritten law to defend the being of the State, that at this time of day recourſe muſt be had to the laſt impotent reſource of deſpotiſm and anarchy, *a law for the occaſion?* Is there no ſtatute to defend it from ſedition in general; none to defend it againſt *Catholics* in particular?—Is the Proteſtant aſcendancy afraid? Where are their Popery laws? Have they not the fifth of William the third, and the firſt of George the ſecond? Are they not ſecure behind all their parchments? Can they not perſuade themſelves to feel bold, entrenched up to the eyes as they are, in their incapacities, their diſabilities, their diſcoveries, their informations, their ſearch warrants, their unintelligible oaths, their disfranchiſements and their penalties?

Are

Are theſe things then of no uſe to them? They have found it out at laſt. Their preſent ſtate of real or pretended alarm is a full confeſſion that "the Popery laws" have *not* given ſecurity to the Church and that they have *not* given ſafety to the State.—That they do not defend it againſt foreign levy, nor againſt domeſtic treaſon. Execrable miniſters of oppreſſion they annihilate the liberty of the ſubject, and add nothing to the ſtrength of government. They are themſelves the danger.

As to the example of the volunteer convention to which your friend aſſimilates your's, (but to which it bears no ſort of reſemblance) it certainly does not juſtify his apprehenſions concerning *you*. The parliament (if I remember right) paſſed *no* declaratory act againſt them, but (with the exception of a few ſpeeches and a pair of reſolutions) patiently pocketed the affront, and *entertained*, though it did not accede to a motion expreſsly proceeding from an armed convention. They might have done the ſame the next year, if they had thought fit, and if the convention had not in the mean time died a natural death. Thus ſtands the caſe. Now does your friend ſuppoſe, that becauſe the Catholics are *not* armed, that therefore the parliament will draw forth all its terrors againſt *them*?—If however, to ſave the credit of parliamentary reſolution, that armed convention

is now to be dug up from its grave for poſthumous execution in order to come at your leſſer, but living criminality, it happens very fortunately, that the defence of that convention does not reſt upon the Catholics. A very fine and ſpirited corps of volunteers has juſt been muſtered by lord Anneſley. I dare ſay they will ſtand up for the honour of *their* convention, and defend it from every aſperſion. There may perhaps be in that corps a few of "that favoured deſcription" who, your correſpondent ſays "have a rooted prejudice againſt monarchy." His Majeſty will undoubtedly feel great obligations to lord Anneſly and *his connections*, for their aſſiduity in arming and arraying his preſbyterian ſubjects. The inhabitants of Belfaſt are doing the ſame. And we may hope, in a ſhort time, by their efforts (in conjunction with thoſe of the preſent miniſters) to ſee a very handſome body of volunteers on foot, ſufficient to defend *the Church* againſt all aſſaults, and to repreſs a convention formed of thoſe whom your friend very juſtly denominates "the true and devoted friends of monarchy, and the victims to their over-zeal for that ſpecies of that conſtitution." I cannot but think that his majeſty is admirably ſerved in his kingdom of Ireland.

But ſuppoſing the terrors of parliamentary indignation

dignation to be got over, your friend is at a loſs to conceive what uſe your convention can poſſibly be of. Among other things it is of uſe in driving your adverſaries into all ſorts of extravagancies and abſurdities, which give you every advantage over them. The very ſuggeſtion of it has brought forth this ſcheme of "the declaratory act" which they have had the additional folly to announce. They indeed expoſe themſelves in every way, to one's heart's content. It is really entertaining to ſee the anticks exhibited by the great jobbers, and the ſmall in the dire diſaſters of perſecution and monopoly. They writhe and twiſt themſelves in a thouſand ways, at once horrible and ridiculous. But it is nearly over—They have gone through the whole fund of ſtate tricks, from the meaneſt political fib, to the boldeſt exceſſes, and the edges of rebellion. From the pomp of office, and the great man's impoſing preſence, to the ingenuous reſerve of the "anonymous threatening letter." From the whiſper in the cloſet, to the declaration of war in the grand-jury room. They have canted and wheedled; they have menaced and ſwaggered,—*every thing* except *common ſenſe and plain dealing*.

Sed quanto ille magis formas ſe vertit in omnes
Tanto Nate magis contende tenacia vincla.

Depend upon it, my dear Sir, they are as the French

French ſay at the end of their Latin. You have them in hand. The game is your own. Form your convention. It is indeed diſagreeable to the preſent adminiſtration, very diſagreeable. But why is it ſo? Not becauſe they think it dangerous to the country (which it can in no wiſe be) but becauſe it reduces *them* to a cruel dilemma. They have thought fit (for their own corrupt intereſts) to ſet up a falſe clamour againſt the Catholics. They have thought fit (after the example of France) to ring the tocſin, and to proclaim through the mouths of twenty grand juries, and as many corporations, that a committee (which they knew to be legal and innocent) was an attack upon parliament and a ſubverſion of the conſtitution. If that committee meets, they are reduced to this dilemma. Either to commit their parliament with a Catholic committee (as they have done with Napper Tandy,) and to drag the legiſlature through that "vaſt imbottomed infinite abyſs" of violence and abſurdity—(their declaratory act) or elſe to let their parliament digeſt the affront which the grand juries have proclaimed ſo loud, and to ſtand themſelves convicted of the fouleſt, moſt audacious, and moſt factious calumny upon Mr. Byrne, the ſub-committee and the Catholics in general. The miniſters (who

are

are your only enemies) have reaſon to dread the meeting of this convention, and beſtir themſelves to prevent it. It will cover them with ſhame and confuſion. It will give the lie direct to all the repreſentations they had made, and to all the aſſurances they have given either here or in England, with regard to the preſent, the paſt and the future.

Is your friend ſerious in ſaying he cannot ſee even "a pretence" for this convention? A pretence indeed, I do not wiſh him to find. The Catholics do not ſtand in need of *pretences*. But if he is not much more dull than either the expreſſions or the tone of his letter imply, his mind might perhaps ſuggeſt *a reaſon* for it. If without mutual communication no human affair can be tranſacted; if in a two-penny cauſe, conſultations muſt be had, that it may have juſtice done to it at Niſi Prius; cannot he juſt imagine that in ſuch a mighty, various and complicated cauſe as your's, involving many facts hiſtorical and recent: and many principles, moral, political and religious—cannot he conceive that in ſuch a cauſe, it may be of *ſome* uſe for the Catholics to be acquainted with each others faces and to act with ſome little concert, inſtead of leaving all things to the crude opinions and deſultory efforts of ſcattered individuals. Thoſe who oppoſe

you

you act upon ſyſtem. *You* muſt do the ſame or you cannot ſucceed. They are a phalanx of hackneyed politicians and experienced intriguers. They have much ability (in their way); they have no principle. You muſt follow and oppoſe them through all their turnings and windings —through all their prevarications and violences. You muſt therefore have your meetings, ſtanding and occaſional; your committees, and your ſub-committees. You muſt do *your* buſineſs as other men do *their* buſineſs. Thoſe who adviſe you to act like children and doodies, when you have to do with us *Proteſtant* politicians, are not judicious friends. It is neceſſary you ſhould be as the ſcripture expreſſes it—innocent as doves, and *wiſe as ſerpents*. You ſhould imitate the example of your adverſaries in every thing (except their morals)—but *not* take their advice in any thing. Beware of inſidious counſel. Confine yourſelves in all things to the bounds of law, and to the principles of the conſtitution. To keep you within thoſe limits and to enable you to act within them with effect —to enable you to chuſe your ground with advantage, and to fight the peaceful battle of your liberties, at every poſt, at every paſs, at every hedge of the conſtitution, that is the uſe of your convention. It is of uſe to ſupport your friends and oppoſe your enemies. It will prevent you from

from being divided and ſplit by a myriad of intrigues. In ſhort it will enable you to eſtabliſh your rights by dint of indefatigable argument and irreſiſtible importunity. As to all that is ſaid about *demand* and all that,—you are to conſider is as the whiſtling of the wind. Whether you aſk, claim, demand, pray, or beg, is nothing to the purpoſe. What you aſk is it juſt, or is it not? That is the queſtion. All the reſt is meer cavil and chicanery.

Such is my poor opinion, but your friend it ſeems, ſets a great account on this ſame word demand. He cannot away with it. The very ſound of it alarms him. He thinks "much has been and might be got by gentle and perſuaſive means"; but "that there is a pride and obſtinacy in a man, which recoils from *demand*." Upon this principle he ſuggeſts an expedient. He recommends it to you (as he ſays he has done *to many*) "that another circular letter ſhould be written, ſtating the *groundleſs alarms* which *the induſtry and malice of your enemies had* raiſed againſt you, and that to give the lie to *their baſe calumnies*. It was determined *to decline this meeting*, and only to preſent a petition ſigned by ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed Catholics on behalf of the whole body praying a redreſs of grievances, and confiding on the well known

juſtice and generoſity of their Proteſtant Brethren' or ſome conciliating paper to that effect.

I have the misfortune not to agree with your friend in any part of his propoſition, or in any one of his concluſions. In the firſt place I do not ſee how the formation of the committee or (convention) excludes the poſſibility of uſing " gentle and perſuaſive means," on the contrary, I do not ſee how it can be done otherwiſe. For that men may commit violence when they are in a ſtate of diſarray and confuſion, I can eaſily conceive. But I do not conceive in what manner three million of people are to uſe " perſuaſive means" (which imply a diſcriminative and careful adaption of meaſures to the intereſts and paſſions of other men) without forming themſelves into ſome deliberative body *or committee* to give a direction to their thoughts and actions.

In the next place I cannot help remembering that in one part of his letter your friend recommends you to purſue " *ſteadily*" your preſent object. But when he comes to particulars, he exhorts you to an inſtant and total change of meaſures. It is for him not for me to reconcile his two propoſitions. To abandon in the twinkling of an eye, a plan adopted with great deliberation, formally announced, and ſyſtematically proſecuted, may be prudence, or may

be policy, or may be a wiſe ſubmiſſion to the change of times and circumſtances; in ſhort it may be any other virtue; but *ſteadineſs* it cannot be.

To take however, the full ſcope of your friend's advice. It runs thus, "*a groundleſs alarm* has been ſpread by *the induſtry and malice of your enemies*" (I uſe his own words, none can be more expreſſive) he ſays moreover, that they have taken this occaſion to awaken "the torpid and expiring prejudices of fanatics" againſt you. In this ſituation what is his advice? To give way to an alarm which himſelf alledges *to be groundleſs*; —To leave a clear ſtage and an open field for the operations of his "prejudiced fanatics, and intereſted monopoliſts;"—and (by an implied acknowledgment, that your meeting was of a dangerous tendency) to plead guilty to the charges of the grand juries; and, by way of *defeating* the malice of your enemies—to give it compleat *effect* by relinquiſhing the meaſure to prevent which that malice was exerted.

Such is the ſhort and long of your friend's counſel. Before you take it, I think we might venture to propound a queſtion or two. For inſtance, if this meeting is relinquiſhed, will your friend anſwer for it, that theſe "induſtrious

and malicious propagators of groundleſs alarms," "and inſtigators of fanatical prejudices" ſhall be brought to condign puniſhment? Will he anſwer for it, that the ſame ſhall not happen again? Will he anſwer that worſe ſhall not happen?—If in the years 1761, and the ſubſequent period, a Catholic committee had been ſitting in Dublin and held their correſpondences regularly, thoſe ſcenes of horrid ſubornation and perjury never could have been acted, nor ſo many judicial maſſacres have been committed on the Catholics in the province of Munſter.

Your friend (as a ſubſtitute for the meeting which is to be abandoned) propoſes that "a petition ſhould be ſigned by *ſome* of the moſt *diſtinguiſhed* of the Catholics, and preſented *on behalf of the whole body* praying a redreſs of grievances, &c." Theſe words are rather remarkable. Your friend indeed pays a juſt compliment to your body in ſuppoſing it contains *many diſtinguiſhed* members. He however recommends, that the petition ſhould be ſigned *not* by the *diſtinguiſhed* or the *moſt* diſtinguiſhed, but by *ſome* of the *moſt* diſtinguiſhed. But how this is to be aſcertained, how this ſelection and re-ſelection, this double diſtillation of the Catholics is to be made, he has not thought proper to ſpecify. I for one do not know and cannot conceive how the operation can be performed,

formed, except by the mode of election, and *double election*, that monſtrous, horrid, and portentous contrivance which has given ſuch alarm to the grand juries and to your friend. But theſe elect and ſelect, but by no means elected Catholics, what are they to do? Why they are to preſent a petition *on behalf of the whole body*. Pray how or from whom are they to derive their authority, if they have it not by delegation of ſome ſort or other? I aſk alſo, what ground is this petition to take? What topics is it to inſiſt upon?—Then alſo it is to pray a redreſs of grievances? What! grievances from the Catholics! And that too, after all the fine things done for them laſt year! O Monſtrous! Grievance implies injuſtice; injuſtice *demand*; demand *force*. An attempt to overawe Parliament! The grand juries will be up in arms; the corporations will be on fire; "the malice and induſtry of fanatics and monopoliſts will raiſe a groundleſs alarm"; your unfortunate correſpondent will be in no better plight than Mr. Byrne himſelf. Reſolutions will rattle about his ears. A declaratory act muſt be paſſed againſt him.—This will be his ſituation with regard to the Proteſtants. With regard to the Catholics, I much fear he will not be more ſucceſsful *this* year with *ſome* of his *moſt* diſtinguiſhed petitioners than Sir Hercules Langriſh was *laſt* year with his

real

"real Catholics." Indeed I ſhrewdly ſuſpect that theſe two deſcriptions of perſons are a little near a kin to each other, or have at leaſt a fellow feeling.

I believe your friend will find upon reflection that this ſcheme of his does not quite hang well together; that it is a little indigeſted; and that if he means the Catholics ſhould petition at all or do *any* thing in their cauſe *good or bad*, he muſt revert to the poor exploded committee or convention (much ſuch as is recommended by Mr. Byrne in his circular letter of 22d May) with all its ſins upon its head.

Your friend's proſpects in the ſucceſs of *his* ſcheme are not very brilliant. He ſays (if you adopt it) "he cannot but *think* you would *ſteal* into the elective franchiſe *by* the next general election." He is not very confident and indeed he ought not. Thus the matter ſtands.—If you follow his advice to an iota, all you have for it is his *ſurmiſe*, that in the courſe of ſix or *ſeven* years, you may arrive at the elective franchiſe—*If* you can get it; and that alſo by (an allowable perhaps) but not certainly the moſt dignified road, viz. That you may *ſteal* into it. The expreſſion is apt. Seven years was not much in the days of the patriarchs. But when you

you have *ſerved* your *ſeven years*, you may be put off with a Leah inſtead of a Rachel. Your good Proteſtant uncle may condeſcend to admit you to the honors of the copyhold (as a reward for tending his cattle) and you will have another apprenticeſhip of ſeven years to ſerve before you are admitted to go in unto the elective franchiſe: that is to ſay if you can *ſteal* into it.

I have heard of ſtolen meat and ſtolen amours, but never of ſtolen privileges. As for this game of ſtealing and theſe petty conſtitutional thefts—You ſhould never think of ſitting down to play at it with ſuch dabs as we proteſtants. You may talk of your members: But there we are too many for you. We have robbed you of ſome of your privileges, ſtolen more, and are much more likely to ſteal the little we have reſtored, than to let you filch what we have retained. To tell you the truth my dear Sir, I have no opinion of ſurreptitious proceedings in an honourable cauſe. In my poor judgment, it is not the part of millions of loyal ſubjects to endeavour to ſneak and wriggle themſelves into a juſt liberty; to become as it were, "The cutpurſe of the conſtitution; To ſteal it from a ſhelf and put in their pocket." If you act like guilty creatures you might well be ſuſpected of guilty deſigns. But

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you have a cauſe that does not fear the light. Stand faſt. Put your foot in the tracks of the conſtitution, and fear no man.—After all, what is the advice of your friend. To make a ſham retreat in order afterwards to effect a ſurpriſe. Believe me you never will circumvent the vigilance of "Monopoliſts and fanatics." You cannot *ſteal* the conſtitution. Win it and wear it.

You are not to ſuppoſe by any thing I have ſaid here, that I do not know the full value of conciliation, and the charm of arrangement and accommodation. Your adverſaries aſſume the ſemblance of it the better to obtain their ends. Incendiaries themſelves they accuſe *me* of kindling ſtriſe. If I know myſelf, amicable arrangement is the choice both of my judgment and of my temper, though I meet diſcuſſion when it is neceſſary. I think indeed that I worſhip the ſpirit of peace. And I would therefore recommend to the Catholics the ſoft arts of conciliation in preference to the rugged paths of altercation and diſpute. Supplications, blandiſhments, endurance, flattery, diſſimulation itſelf are uſeful in civil affairs; and meekneſs is a great virtue. But every virtue has its ſeaſon. We muſt take care not to be the dupes of our own virtue, and not to make the forbearing charity of the juſt, a handle to the malignity of the perverſe. There is an amity

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that ends in ſtrife, and there are diſcuſſions that *lead* to concord. To compound with rank hoſtility, is *not* a compromiſe. To give way to a fierce aſſault, is *not* conceſſion. To be circumvented, is *not* to embrace.

It is very eaſy for thoſe who ſtand *within* the conſtitution to give fair words to thoſe who ſtand *without it*; and to ſay to them, "My dear friends, let us have no bickerings and diſputes. Ceaſe knocking. Let us hear no more of your petards and your hand grenadoes, your reſolutions and your declarations. They interrupt our ſlumbers. Only have a little patience. We ſhall all be friends in time. Prejudices wear away by degrees. We hate you a little now to be ſure. But no matter for that. One day or other, we ſhall *grow into one people*. You are cold, wet and hungry, it is true; but then it muſt be a great comfort to you to think how warm and ſnug *we* are. When we are tired of ſleeping and feeding; of drinking and of carouſing in the feaſt of monopoly, we will come down and open the gates—perhaps, and (if you behave well in the mean time) let you in." All this is mighty well. But I like to ſee actions correſpond with words. While theſe men of Angiers make fine ſpeeches from the battlements, their guns are ſweeping our ranks. It pleaſes me well to ſee

the white flag. But why do the artillery of the grand juries continue to fire. I ſhould wiſh to ſee that battery ſilenced. We feel ourſelves galled with the ſmall arms of Faulkner's Journal; the calumnies, the ſcurrility, the ſophiſtry and the lies. I like the language of conciliation well, very well. But I do not like the double parlance of the caſtle runners.

All wiſdom, Sir, depends upon the adaption of conduct to ſituation, and not upon purſuing general principles either of conciliation or of contention. My opinion of your ſituation (and it does not ſeem much to differ from that of your correſpondent) is, that the preſent oppoſition to the juſt pretenſions of the Catholics, proceeds ſolely from *avarice and pride*; and that your adverſaries attack and endeavour to overpower you with the arms of calumny and falſe accuſation —dreadful inſtruments indeed, and which full well they know how to handle. In this circumſtance, difficult in itſelf, and painful to all good minds, there is ſome embarraſsment. To yield and to bow: and to let the wave paſs over your head, is one of the expedients that occurs, and occurs moſt to good minds. Not that I ſay this to their advantage. On the contrary it happens through the weakneſs incident to human virtue. There is ſomething gentle and meek in the compoſition

poſition of a virtuous and innocent mind, which, as it were, unfits it for the rude ſtorms of public defamation and the clamours of corrupt politicians. They are but too much diſpoſed to ſhrink from the blaſt; and partly from a little timidity; partly from a little ſloth; but partly alſo from the aſſurance of conſcious integrity, to truſt to chance, inſtead of relying upon rational exertion. This temper of mind however, gives incredible advantage to bold outrage, and audacious falſehood. Of all things in the world good cauſes are thoſe which will the leaſt ſhift for themſelves. So conſider your's. If indeed it is true, (as true it is) that you are thwarted by ſelf intereſt and aſſailed by calumny, they are enemies which will riſe upon your conceſſion and trample on your patience. It is the weakeſt notion in the world to imagine, you can ever diſarm malignity by endurance. To think to aſſuage the venom of falſe accuſation by the charm of ſilence (while it rankles in your fair reputation) is to cheriſh the worm that feeds upon your vitals.

Your friend talks much to you of "gentle inſinuations and perſuaſive means." It only ſhews the goodneſs of his heart. His "Monopoliſts and fanatics" are not that ſort of *animal* which is to be wheedled out of its prey, and

looſen its gripe at the ſound of the flageolet. The thing ſpeaks for itſelf. The Catholics (on their part) ought to hold up their heads. They have a right to do it. They ought to ſolicit enquiry; to provoke diſcuſſion; to defy calumny. With regard to their adverſaries, (whom it is childiſhneſs to think of perſuading) they muſt beat them by dint of argument, detect their iniquities, unravel their ſophiſtry; raiſe the voice of reaſon above their noiſy "groundleſs clamours"; expoſe them to ridicule and ſhame, and call upon the Laws to puniſh them for their mal-practices.

This I have thought fit to ſay, becauſe in recommending any thing like vigour and ſpirit, to avoid miſrepreſentation, it is neceſſary to dilate: And ſuch is the charm contained in whatever has even the ſound of conciliation, that it is neceſſary to guard againſt an inſidious and hypocritical uſe of it. It has already impoſed upon the mind of your friend. If it deceives any one of the Catholics, it will be no fault of mine. On other matters I do not enlarge at preſent, becauſe in future I mean to commune very fully with the public on all theſe affairs.

I ſhall only trouble you with one obſervation more on the letter of your correſpondent. I do

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it, becauſe, by his account, he has acceſs to the caſtle, and ſometimes (as he expreſſes himſelf) "Regiſters his ſentiments there." He recommends that the Catholics ſhould "confide in the juſtice and generoſity *of their Proteſtant Brethren.*" I have heard much of late of theſe ſame "Proteſtant Brethren" upon whoſe *arbitrary* will (as it ſhould ſeem) the deciſion of theſe great queſtions intirely depends, and indeed the whole deſtiny of the Catholics both now and hereafter. I ſhould be glad to be informed what part *it* is of the government and conſtitution of this country. I cannot find it in any law or ſtatute. I am myſelf "a Proteſtant Brother" and would fain know the nature and extent of my *prerogatives*. I certainly feel my vanity, my pride, my ſelf importance, and my ſelf intereſt infinitely flattered in the idea, that 3 or 4 millions of my fellow-ſubjects are to look up to *my* generoſity, and to *my* juſtice; And that too, with the moſt diſtant, proſtrate and reſigned expectation. In the midſt of theſe pleaſing dreams, I cannot however, avoid recollecting, that there is in this conſtitution, ſuch a perſon as a King, or as ſome people ſay *the* King. And I wiſh your correſpondent would juſt whiſper, that forgotten truth, at the caſtle, if he is not afraid of giving offence, I wiſh he would be pleaſed to ſuggeſt that it might perhaps be as well, if *every* occaſion was not taken to bring the

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idea and even *the name* of a King into diſuſe among the people, and ſtudiouſly to accuſtom them to look *any* where for relief and protection *except* to the throne. However laudable and proper this might have been in former times (though I believe it is perfectly new) I ſhould beg leave to ſuggeſt whether miniſters might not *at this time* be at leaſt excuſeable, if they endeavoured to turn the thoughts of *both Catholics and Proteſtants* to the generoſity and juſtice *of their common ſovereign.* And whether *that* would not be at leaſt as uſeful to the real intereſts of the king their maſter, as it can be, to employ all the influence of the crown, to inſtigate the Proteſtant to vain aſſertions of ſuperiority and pre-eminence, and to trample the Catholics, from a manly, liberal and loyal obedience (ſuch as is defined by law and juſtified by reaſon) to trample them, I ſay, into a baſe, abject and unlimited dependance, not upon the King —but upon another deſcription of their fellow-ſubjects, or rather (under that pretence) upon *themſelves.*

I am, dear Sir,

Your moſt obedient

And very humble Servant,

R. BURKE.

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